

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 03212 052318Z
ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 INR-07 SSO-00 INRE-00 /018 W
-----052328Z 028197 /13

O R 052245Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1786
INFO PANCANAL
USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: MILI PFOR PN PQ
SUBJECT: NATIONAL GUARD ANNOUNCES "CANAL DEFENCE" MANUEVERS

1. IN A COMMUNIQUE READ OVER PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT RADIO AT 1245 THURSDAY, MAY 5, NATIONAL GUARD ANNOUNCED A FIVE DAY TACTICAL MANEUVER "TO TRAIN PERSONNEL IN A SIMULATED DEFENCE OF THE PANAMA CANAL AGAINST POTENTIAL ENEMIES OR UNIDENTIFIED ELEMENTS".

2. ACCORDING TO COMMUNIQUE, MOBILIZATION WILL BEGIN FRIDAY MORNING, MAY 6, AND ACTUAL OPERATION WILL COMMENCE MAY 9. OPERATION IS TO INVOLVE MOVEMENT OF ARMED FORCES FROM VERA CRUZ, JUST WEST OF CANAL ZONE BORDER ON PACIFIC SIDEN TO PINA, ON ATLANTIC SIDE. COMMUNIQUE STATES THAT FORCES INVOLVED WILL BE A BATTALION INCLUDING LAND, AIR AND SEA ELEMENTS.

3. TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE AND RADIO STATION COMMENTARY WHICH FOLLOWED IT MAKE IT EVIDENT THAT THIS PUBLIC OPERATION IS INTENDED AS AN ANSWER OF SORTS TO PURPORTED "MENACING" GESTURES FROM US MILITARY IN RECENT WEEKS. WITHOUT MENTIONING US BY NAME, COMMUNIQUE REFERS TO "THE SIMILAR 8-DAY TACTICAL EXERCISE BEING CARRIED OUT BY A NEIGHBORING ARMED FORCE IN THE SAME PORTION OF THE SO-CALLED CANAL ZONE UNDER THE TITLE THE BALBOA CROSSING". THE GN OPERATION HAS BEEN DESIGNATED "OHN WHAT FEAR", ACCORDING TO THE COMMUNIQUE
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"FOR OBVIOUS REASONS".

4. FULL TEXT OF GN COMMUNIQUE FBIS/PANAMA PA 051830Y, AND STATION COMMUNIQUE FBIS/PANAMA PA 051917Y.

5. USMILGROUP/PANAMA ADVISES THAT AN OPERATION OF THIS SORT, FOR TRAINING PURPOSES, HAS BEEN CONTEMPLATED FOR SOME MONTHS BY G-3

(TRAINING AND OPERATIONS) SECTION OF GN GENERAL STAFF, WITHOUT MUCH AFFIRMATIVE ACTION HAVING BEEN TAKEN TO EXECUTE ITM THE PROPOSED ROUTE WILL CLOSELY FOLLOW THAT OF LAST YEAR'S ADMINISTRATIVE MARCH ALONG THE CANAL ZONE BORDER. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION PROVIDED TO MILGROUP BY GN, ROUTE CONTEMPLATES CROSSING GATUN LAKE WHERE ZONE JUTS INTO THE REPUBLIC WEST OF CANAL.

6. GN REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN HELICOPTER MAINTENANCE BEGINNING MAY 3 LEAD US TO INFER THAT DECISION TO EMBARK ON THIS OPERATION WAS PROBABLY MADE THAT DAY.
GONZALEZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY TRAINING, MILITARY EXERCISES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
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Format: TEL
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
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Litigation History:
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Review Date: 29-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
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